

52 member attachment portion is formed by the blow-molding process forming the inner door panel and the door trim into the integral one-piece unit.

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the present amendment and the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-7, and 11 remain pending in this application, claims 8-10 having been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, and claim 1 having been amended, by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 8-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite, claims 1, 6, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over *Kobrehel*, and claims 3-5 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Kobrehel* in view of *Grimes*.

Applicants have proposed drawing corrections because it has been noticed that the corrected formal drawings filed with the Amendment After Final Rejection Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 had a mistake in that reference numeral “3” (representing the “door trim” which is still disclosed in the specification on page 7, line 22, page 9, line 12, and page 12, line 5) was inadvertently deleted from FIG. 1 in the corrected formal drawings that were submitted. Therefore, Applicants are hereby reinserting reference numeral “3” into drawing FIG. 1.

Applicants respectfully submit that the proposed correction to the drawing does not add new matter. Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request approval of the proposed drawing correction.

Applicant respectfully requests that the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office correct its records to reflect that the title of the invention is “DOOR TRIM STRUCTURE FOR AUTOMOBILES” as noted on page 1, line 2, of Applicant’s specification and in Applicant’s

declaration filed with the national stage filing of the application on March 15, 2001. It is noted that the International Searching Authority changed the title of the invention from “DOOR TRIM STRUCTURE FOR AUTOMOBILES” to --DOOR INSIDE MEMBER FOR CAR-- during the pendency of the International Patent Cooperation Treaty or PCT application. However, Applicant still considers the title of the invention to be “DOOR TRIM STRUCTURE FOR AUTOMOBILES,” and thus, respectfully requests that the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office correct its records to reflect this title of the invention.

Applicant has amended the specification to insert reference characters “3a” and “3b” into the specification since such reference characters are shown in FIG. 1, but have not been formally identified in the specification until now. More particularly, on page 13, line 9, the specification discloses the “upper area of the door trim,” but fails to designate it with reference character “3a” and on page 13, lines 10-11, the specification discloses the “lower area of the door trim,” but fails to designate it with reference character “3b.” Therefore, the upper and lower areas of the door trim have been designated with the correct reference characters by the present amendment to the specification. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments to the specification does not add new matter.

Claims 8-10 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, and claim 1 has been amended. More particularly, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite a door trim structure for automobiles, the door trim structure comprising: a door trim and an inner door panel both made of a thermoplastic resin, the inner door panel and the door trim are formed into an integral one-piece unit by a blow-molding process, wherein the inner door panel includes a functional member attachment portion integral with the inner door panel, and wherein the functional member attachment portion includes a recess or a protrusion as a part of an inner wall of the door trim structure such that the functional member attachment

portion is formed by the blow-molding process forming the inner door panel and the door trim into the integral one-piece unit.

As a quick synopsis of the applied prior art references, Applicant hereby repeats the abstracts of *Kobrehel* and *Grimes*, as follows.

Kobrehel discloses a modular insert trim unit provided for a motor vehicle door. The modular insert trim unit includes a one-piece molded plastic door cavity insert having a passenger-side aesthetic trim surface. The door cavity insert preferably is a hollow body structure formed by reaction injection molding and having unitary mounting bosses for structurally mounting functional door hardware and for mounting the modular insert trim unit to structural componentry of the door assembly. The modular insert trim unit preferably is preassembled as a self-supporting unit which can be inserted conveniently into a door cavity defined at least in part by an outer panel of the door assembly. Window regulator hardware, door lock and handle hardware, are thus installed into a motor vehicle door as an integrated unit with the door cavity insert, which further provides the aesthetic passenger-side trim surface generally required for motor vehicle doors. Armrests and cargo bins can be provided as unitary extensions of the hollow body door cavity insert.

Grimes discloses an inner door panel assembly for a vehicle door is adapted to be connected to an outer door panel to form a space therebetween for a window and a window regulator; the inner door panel assembly is an all plastic composite assembly including an inner covering on the inner surface of a molded plastic substrate. The substrate includes first and second integrally formed hollow boxes thereon faced in the direction of the interior space to absorb side impact energy directed against the side of the outer door panel.

Neither *Kobrehel* nor *Grimes* teaches or suggests, as is now recited in amended claim 1, a door trim structure for automobiles, the door trim structure comprising: a door trim and

an inner door panel both made of a thermoplastic resin, the inner door panel and the door trim are formed into an integral one-piece unit by a blow-molding process, wherein the inner door panel includes a functional member attachment portion integral with the inner door panel, and wherein the functional member attachment portion includes a recess or a protrusion as a part of an inner wall of the door trim structure such that the functional member attachment portion is formed by the blow-molding process forming the inner door panel and the door trim into the integral one-piece unit.

More particularly, Applicant respectfully submits that even if *Kobrehel* discloses a kind of functional member attachment portion on the inner door panel thereof, the functional member attachment portion (20) is attached on the flat inner door panel as an independent body, which requires a separate attachment process and positioning work, and is not integrally formed as a one-piece unit with the inner door panel and the door trim by means of a blow-molding process.

In the present invention, the functional member attachment portion is integrated with the inner door panel using an advanced blow-molding technique as has been specifically recited. Since the functional member attachment portion is integrally provided and is formed at the same time as the blow-molding of the inner door panel (2) and the door trim (3), the work of attachment and positioning is no longer necessary, and this is not taught, disclosed, or suggested by either *Kobrehel* or *Grimes*.

Further, amended claim 1 now recites that the functional member attachment portion includes either a recess or a protrusion and this is also not taught or suggested by either *Kobrehel* or *Grimes*.

Applicant respectfully submits that the amendment to claim 1 does not add new matter. Applicant also respectfully submits that claims 3-7 and 11 are now either directly or

indirectly dependent upon amended claim 1 so that arguments serving to patentably distinguish amended claim 1 from the prior art of record are available, among others, to patentably distinguish claims 3-7 and 11. Based on the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections of the claims under U.S.C. § 102(b) and § 103(a), and allowance of claims 1, 3-7, and 11.

In view of the foregoing, claims 1, 3-7, and 11 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification, as follows:

Page 13, lines 5-17, please amend the paragraph, as follows:

In the door trim structure 1 of the present invention, in general, a plurality of recesses each having a desired depth may be formed on the inner wall, and the recesses thus formed act as shock absorbers. For shock absorption, the recesses constitute the upper shock absorption site 5 in the upper area of the door trim 3a, and the lower shock absorption site 6 in the lower area of the door trim 3b. Depending on the necessary characteristics for shock absorption, the recesses may be planned in any desired manner. Their size, shape, distribution, depth, and depth distribution shall be suitably determined, with the wall thickness being taken into consideration. One example of the shape and the distribution of the recesses and also the inner sealing sites of [the] both walls is shown in Fig. 2.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 8-10, without prejudice or disclaimer, and amend claim 1, as follows:

1. (Amended) A door trim structure for automobiles, the door trim structure comprising:
a door trim and an inner door panel both [which is] made of a thermoplastic resin[and of which an], the inner door panel and [a] the door trim are [integrally blow-molded] formed

into an integral one-piece unit by a blow-molding process, wherein the inner door panel includes a functional member attachment portion [integrated] integral with the inner door panel, and wherein the functional member attachment portion includes a recess or a protrusion as a part of an inner wall of the door trim structure such that the functional member attachment portion is formed by the blow-molding process forming the inner door panel and the door trim into the integral one-piece unit.

8-10. (Canceled).